

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2025

The Honorable Adam Telle
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
U.S. Department of the Army
Office of the Assistant Secretary (Civil Works)
104 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Lieutenant General William H. Graham
Commanding General and Chief of Engineers
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear Assistant Secretary Telle and General Graham:

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russell Vought posted on X that the Army Corps of Engineers will immediately pause over \$11 billion in funding for essential Corps projects, including in “New York, San Francisco, Boston, and Baltimore” and will be “considering them for cancellation.” Director Vought justified this “pause” by absurdly claiming it was necessary because the government shutdown “has drained the Army Corps of Engineers’ ability to manage billions of dollars in projects.” That is not how this works—and everyone knows it. Director Vought is once again recklessly threatening communities’ safety and treating the American people as pawns in his political games. Earlier in the week, the Trump administration warned of more political retribution against Democrats, and yet again, Vought has delivered, seeking to inflict more pain on the American people.

Let’s be clear: undermining these critical infrastructure projects jeopardizes public safety and will inflict serious economic harm on communities that depend on these vital investments. The Corps protects communities by providing flood control, ensuring safe navigation of the nation’s waterways, environmental restoration, and emergency response—work that saves lives and supports local economies. This craven political threat betrays working families and our nation's obligation to protect life and property. It

risks leaving communities more vulnerable to storms and floods—and puts at risk the projects that literally save lives—levees, floodwalls, wastewater upgrades, coastal protections, and so much more.

It has not escaped anyone's notice that the states and cities Director Vought has said he is targeting are cities represented by Democrats. This transparent political targeting of American communities is unconscionable, and unfortunately, it is par for the course for this White House. The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from using their official authority for partisan political purposes, and this prohibition extends to all federal agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Corps of Engineers is a professional, non-partisan organization with a proud history of dutifully serving the American public over two centuries—and once again, its proud mission is being corrupted by President Trump and Director Vought.

Federal infrastructure investments should be based on engineering merit, cost-benefit analysis, community need, and statutory authorization—not political retribution. Every American, regardless of how their neighbors vote, deserves federal flood protection, safe navigation channels, and clean waterways. Weaponizing the Army Corps of Engineers against political opposition degrades this essential institution and betrays its mission.

Incredibly, despite this administration's claims to be the “most transparent administration,” neither OMB nor the Corps of Engineers has publicly released—or provided to Congress—a list of the projects that Director Vought says he is targeting with his action. That, too, is unacceptable. The American people deserve transparency about how their taxpayer dollars are being spent—and how this administration is hurting public safety in their own communities.

Further, Congress appropriated these funds through the lawful legislative process. The executive branch lacks the authority to unilaterally cancel congressionally authorized and funded projects. We demand that you immediately unpause all projects that have been halted since Director Vought's announcement and restore them to their previous operational status, provide details about all projects that have been affected thus far, and explain what statutory or regulatory authority the Corps claims to have to pause or cancel work on congressionally authorized and appropriated projects.

Make no mistake—this pause is already doing damage. The uncertainty harms local governments, unions, small businesses, and families. It weakens our nation's resilience against floods and disaster. It places political considerations above public safety. That is unacceptable.

We expect your prompt response no later than October 30 and look forward to working together to ensure that the Army Corps of Engineers can continue its vital mission of serving all Americans.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
House Committee on Appropriations



Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Energy and Water Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations